

The landscape design as a social class image. Considerations towards the new segregation patterns in Brazil.

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The big and medium Brazilian cities are marked by what is common called incomplete modernization in which social inequalities – a powerful element of Brazilian society – are present and active characteristics in urban landscape configuration. These inequalities can be seen in a physic and symbolic levels in the urban space and its organization and the resulted landscape of these conditions is symptomatic. Big portions of richness or poverty create a fragmented and not continuous urban environment. The increase of urban problems complexity in the 1970 decade, in which many economic topics led rich and poor people to live near each other – in opposition to the previous situation when each social class occupied its own portion of the city –, causes the appearing of a new middle and high social class type of real estate developments with peculiar characteristics. These developments usually occupy a large amount of urban space, isolating buildings and its inhabitants inside its walled boundaries to supposedly protect them from an urban environment seen as chaotic and hostile. There are many arguments to support building and diffusing this model of architecture and the main one is the fearing of urban violence. This is probably the most powerful argument used to justified and sell this lifestyle to consumers. However, in the last years, we can observe the emerging of a new ideological speech, which is the establishment of an image for middle and high classes on its own by manipulating landscape and architecture. These two mechanisms, one in the physic level and the other one in a symbolic level of social distinction by the architecture and landscape operation are seen as an obstacle to a fair and democratic society. If we agree that the presence of distinguished people at the same space with public character is the basic condition to consolidate of democratic, fairness and social equality ideals, so we need to agree the Brazilian urban space do not contemplate the minimum conditions to these ideals can grow. By restricting the contact of differences, these processes in course in Brazilian medium and big cities causes the deepening of social segregation problems that lead to a decrease of public urban life in its diversity and decrease of integration of all social classes in a civilized way, which is the concept of urbanity. The aim of this paper is to discuss social sustainability of this construction pattern in Brazilian cities. The methodology is developed through theoretical approach, evaluation of barred urban real estate developments and questionnaires to those living in these buildings. We hope to be able to deepen the discussion the architecture and its purpose in an unequal country as Brazil is.